

Waukegan News Sun, April 12, 2005

The U.S. Navy has announced that a rare stretch of undeveloped Lake Michigan shoreline on Fort Sheridan property will be transferred to an environmental trust for permanent preservation.

Lobbying for preservation of the property has come from several corners, including the Chicago-based Openlands Project, the city of Highland Park, the Lake Forest Open Lands organization and U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, R-Highland Park, who resides in a developed area of Fort Sheridan.

"We are delighted with the Navy's announcement that these unique natural areas and pristine shorelines and bluffs will be protected," said Joyce O'Keefe, associate director of Openlands. "This property is a rare example of Lake Michigan shoreline in Illinois that still exists in its natural state."

Openlands is working to raise funds to help pay for a survey and restoration plan for the property.

"With careful management, the shoreline, ravines and bluffs can be restored to their previous condition for the public to enjoy," O'Keefe said, adding that five endangered or threatened species have been found on the property.

"This is truly a great gift to the people of our region and to future generations," she said.

Kirk sponsored legislation calling for the preservation of the property and its transfer to an environmental group.